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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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March 29, 2006

Ald. Robert J. Bauman  
286-2886

## **\$300 Million Guided Bus Plan Will Require City To Demolish And Reconstruct Recent Streetscaping Improvements On Wisconsin Ave.**

In testimony today before the Common Council's Public Works Committee, it was revealed that the \$300 million guided bus plan being proposed for Milwaukee will require the demolition and reconstruction of much of the \$17.2 million worth of streetscaping work being done on Wisconsin Ave.

According to Clark Wantoch, administration and transportation design manager in the Department of Public Works, the ongoing streetscaping project has been proceeding in four phases. The first two phases from 2nd St. to 4th St. and from the Milwaukee River to Milwaukee St., have already been completed, and streetscaping work from 4th St. to 10th St. and (at its eastern-most end) from Milwaukee St. to Mason St. is scheduled for this summer. The remaining segment, from the Milwaukee River to 2nd St., is scheduled for next year, he said.

Wantoch said a total of \$17.2 million will have been spent on the Wisconsin Ave. work when the project is completed. The project is funded by a combination of federal funds (80%) and local property tax dollars (20%).

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## **Guided Bus System Will Rip Up New Streetscaping/ADD ONE**

The \$300 million guided bus plan proposes to use Wisconsin Ave from 10th St. to Mason St. for a portion of its 13-mile route.

Construction of the guided bus right-of-way, stations and poles to support the overhead wires that power the guided buses will require the demolition and reconstruction of the same streets, intersections, sidewalks and curbs and gutters that were replaced or reconstructed in connection with the streetscaping project. These improvements will be replaced and reconstructed within about five years if the \$300 million guided bus plan is approved -- long before the end of the useful life of these costly improvements, Ald. Bauman said.

Alderman Bauman, chair of the Public Works Committee stated: "This is the type of government planning that drives citizens and business owners crazy. We go in, rip up the sidewalks and streets for one project, then go back in and do it all over again for some other project a few years later."

Ald. Bauman continued: "Each time we do this we inconvenience pedestrians and motorists and make it more difficult for small businesses to survive. Residents and business owners frequently ask me: 'Why can't all of this work be done at once?' Why can't the city plan its projects better?"

"I support the streetscaping project. It will improve the appearance of Wisconsin Ave. and make 'The Avenue' more pedestrian friendly," Ald. Bauman said. "I do not support ripping it all out in five years to build a costly and unnecessary \$300 million guided bus system."

A Common Council resolution endorsing the connector project guided bus system is scheduled to be heard at the April 27th meeting of the Council's Steering & Rules Committee.